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(GP2-0163-P)

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A method for separating a soluble polymer resin from a solution slurry, which contains a solid phase of said polymer resin as particulates, said method comprising:

adding to a solution slurry which contains at least one soluble polymer resin and a solid phase of said polymer resin as particulates, a linear or chain-branched polymeric precipitation aid which absorbs onto the surface of the polymer resin particulates in said solution slurry, wherein said precipitation aid is a suitable blend component for formulations of said polymer resin; and

adding the solution slurry, which contains said precipitation aid, to a non-solvent for the soluble polymer resin to precipitate the soluble polymer resin within said solution slurry.

2. (original) A method as in claim 1 comprising the additional step of recovering the precipitate from said solution slurry.

3. (original) A method as in claim 2, wherein the precipitate is recovered from said solution slurry by filtration through a filter having a pore size greater than 100 microns.

4. (original) A method as in claim 2, wherein over 90% of the total polymer resin in said solution slurry, including the soluble polymer resin and the solid phase polymer resin, is recovered as particles of a size greater than 100 microns.

5. (original) A method as in claim 1, wherein the soluble polymer resin in said solution slurry is selected from the group consisting of polycarbonates, polystyrenes, rubber modified polystyrenes, polyphenylene ethers, polyetherimides, polyamides, and polycesters.

6. (original) A method as in claim 1, wherein the soluble polymer resin within the solution slurry is a polyphenylene ether resin.

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7. (original) A method as in claim 1, wherein the soluble polymer resin within said solution slurry is a copolymer of 2,6-xenol and 2,3,6-trimethylphenol and the solution slurry is a reaction medium of a solution polymerization process in which said copolymer has been produced.

8. (original) A method as in claim 1, which comprises the additional step of concentrating said solution slurry after the addition of said precipitation aid to achieve a concentration of soluble polymer resin above 10%, based on the total weight of said solution slurry.

9. (original) A method as in claim 8, wherein said solution slurry is concentrated by heating to a temperature above 50°C, optionally with the application of vacuum.

10. (original) A method as in claim 6, wherein the precipitation aid is selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polystyrenes, polyamides, and impact modifiers.

11. (original) A method as in claim 10, wherein the impact modifier is selected from the group consisting of natural rubbers, synthetic rubbers and thermoplastic elastomers selected from the group consisting of olefin homopolymers, olefin copolymers, styrene homopolymers, styrene copolymers, homopolymers of conjugated dienes, copolymers of conjugated dienes, homopolymers of vinyl carboxylic acids, copolymers of vinyl carboxylic acids, homopolymers of derivatives of vinyl carboxylic acids and copolymers of derivatives of vinyl carboxylic acids.

12. (original) A method as in claim 11, wherein the olefin copolymers comprise EPDM copolymers, the conjugated diene homopolymers comprise polybutadiene and the styrene copolymers include AB, (AB)-R and ABA block copolymers.

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13. (original) A method as in claim 12, wherein the styrene block copolymers comprise styrene-butadiene-styrene block copolymers,

styrene-ethylene-butylene-styrene block copolymers,

polystyrene-polyisoprene-polystyrene block copolymers,

hydrogenated polystyrene-polybutadiene-polystyrene block copolymers and

poly(alpha-methylstyrene)-polyisoprene-poly(alpha-methylstyrene) block copolymers.

14. (original) A method as in claim 11, wherein the styrene copolymer is a styrene block copolymer.

15. (original) A method as in claim 1, wherein the amount of precipitation aid added to said solution slurry falls within the range of 1 to 10 wt. %, based on the total weight of soluble polymer resin in said solution slurry.

16-27. (canceled)

28. (new) A method as in claim 6, wherein the precipitation aid is an impact modifier selected from the group consisting of natural rubbers, synthetic rubbers, thermoplastic elastomers, olefin homopolymers, olefin copolymers, styrene homopolymers, styrene copolymers, homopolymers of conjugated dienes, copolymers of conjugated dienes, homopolymers of vinyl carboxylic acids, copolymers of vinyl carboxylic acids, and homopolymers of derivatives of vinyl carboxylic acids and copolymers of derivatives of vinyl carboxylic acids.

29. (new) A method as in claim 6, wherein the precipitation aid is selected from the group consisting of EPDM copolymers, polybutadiene, and styrene copolymers block copolymers of the form AB, (AB)-R, and ABA.

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30. (now) A method as in claim 6, wherein the precipitation aid is a styrene block copolymer.

31. (now) A method as in claim 30, wherein the styrene block copolymer is selected from the group consisting of styrene-butadiene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene-butylene-styrene block copolymers, polystyrene-polyisoprene-polystyrene block copolymers, hydrogenated polystyrene-polybutadiene-polystyrene block copolymers, and poly(alpha-methylstyrene)-polyisoprene-poly(alpha-methylstyrene) block copolymers.